

Bandwagon

Vol. 5— JULY, 1950

-15c

C.H.S. CONVENTION AUGUST 4-6 **HEADQUARTERS AT PALMER HOUSE HOTEL**

BANQUET SATURDAY NIGHT

All roads lead to Chicago, Illinois, for the Fifth Annual Circus Historical Society Convention to be held from August 4th to 6th. Convention headquarters will be at the beautiful Palmer House Hotel located at the corner of State and Monroe Streets.

The Convention will open Friday with a business session. A banquet and movies and other entertainment will be held Saturday night. On Sunday there will be a memorial service and a visit to the Circus at the Fair.

Bette Leonard, the societies hard-working president, will fly to Chicago to attend the three-day meeting. Since submitting to several surgical operations, Mrs. Leonard will have her stay in Chicago limited to three days.

The Chicago Public Library has announced the exhibit of the circus collection of CHS member Walter C. Scholl during the month of August in connection with the Convention. Mr. Scholl's collection numbers over 15,000 pieces and is considered one of the largest in the nation.

As this article is being prepared, the Convention program is incomplete, however, a complete program and a good time is assured.

Points of interest in Chicago are numerous and include Adler Planetarium, Art Institute, Grant Park, Lincoln Park, Brookfield Zoo, Shedd Aquarium, Chinatown, Maxwell Street, Little Italy, and many other interesting places to visit.

HOBBY

Bandwagon

122 South Main Street

Camden, Ohio

JULY, 1950

Vol. 5

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HARRY M. SIMPSON

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Circus Photos

FROM ORIGINAL NEGATIVES

Many from the Wm. Koford Collection

Partial List Now Ready

SHANK PHOTOS

Clarence R. Shank

Member of CHS and CFA

Camden, Ohio

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CIRCUS FANS ASSOCIATION PASSES RESOLUTION

The Secretary of the CHS has received the following Resolution, passed by the Circus Fans Association at their Convention in Denver:

"BE IT RESOLVED: That the Circus Fans Association of America recognizes the importance of the preservation of historic material, and therefore commends the work of the Circus Historical Society, who are making it possible to actively preserve the source material of the past."

Gil Conlin, Secretary of CFA wrote a very nice letter in connection with this resolution, and we of CHS certainly appreciate this recognition given us by our fellow organization.

VOGELSANG MAKES NILES DAILY STAR

Johnny Vogelsang was the theme of an article and picture appearing in the June 22nd issue of the Niles (Mich.) Daily Star. The article pays tribute to Vogelsang and has a fine publicity plug for the Circus Historical Society. The illustration shows Johnny pointing to his photograph of Norma Davenport Cristiani which appeared on the cover of a recent Hobby-Bandwagon.

BARNUM FESTIVAL PROGRAMS

The Barnum Festival of Bridgeport, Conn., issued another interesting program this year and is a must for all collectors of the circus. Copies may be had by writing Dorothy A. Mohr, Exc. Secy., Barnum Festival, 925 Main St., Bridgeport, Conn. Send 15c per copy plus sufficient postage.

WORST U.S. CIRCUS TRAIN DISASTER

The worst U.S. circus train disaster occurred near Ivanhoe, Indiana, about three o'clock on the morning of June 22, 1918. A hot-box had stopped the train, which carried part of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, and its flagman had gone back down the track to stop an empty troop train that followed. The flagman saw the second train and began to wave his red lantern, but the train came thundering on, ignoring his frantic efforts as well as two automatic signals set against it. In desperation the flagman hurled a flaming flare into the cab of the engine as it passed him. A minute later it crashed into the circus train, killing 68 and injuring 127 or nearly all the others aboard. Investigation showed that not only had the engineer of the troop train dozed off, but his fireman had failed to notice that he was asleep or that they had raced by two stop signals. He did not even see the bright flare that had come flying in the window and had landed beside him.

* * * *

While in Chicago for the Convention, members of the CHS will hold Memorial Services at the grave of the victims of this disaster.

Those visiting the Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus during their stands in Indiana and Ohio included Mr. and Mrs. Chalmer Condon, Dorcas Condon, Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. King, Ann King, George Piercy, Otto Schiemann, Hubert H. D. Golden, Melvin J. Olsen, Jerry Olsen, Clarence Shank, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Conover, Albert Conover, Jake Conover, Sally Conover, M. W. Organ, Ed. Hillhouse, Harry M. Simpson, Michael Simpson. Mr. and Mrs. Bert Dearo visited Lebanon, Ohio. Many will remember that Mr. Dearo was the contortionist in the picture sent out by the Circus Historical Society recently.

The following appeared in the British Circus Ring Notes of the WORLD'S FAIR of May 6th: "It is with great pleasure that B.C.R. is able to report that Larry Turnbull has recently received his certificate of membership of the Circus Historical Society of America. There are few members of this society in Great Britain. We have only one other member of the B.C.R. who is also a member of this Society, and he is Mr. Eddy Hawthorne of Thornton Heath."

A beautiful colored postcard has been issued showing the Original Gentry Bros. Circus Steam Calliope owned by Dr. C. S. Karland Frischkorn of Norfolk, Va.

Louis William Kreischer recently received his degree of electrical engineering from Portland University in Portland, Oregon.

NOTES FROM MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

Before the Big One left for the north we had some great sessions out here. A couple afternoons a week Fred and Ella Bradna would bring their guests out, and when Fred is around things always hum. He is a great old guy. If I run down a list of names of the old-timers who call on us it would look like a program dating from 1890 to the present time. Yes, 1890 is what I said. We have an old gentlemen by the name of Leers living in town who was on the Sells Bros. Show in 1891. And can he tell stories.

The Fischer's (giants) drop in with their guests regularly. Jenny Rooney, also. I could go on and on.

In the large museum building we display model circuses of different periods, all in three dimension, i.e. Astley's English 1800 Theatre, French 1875, Modern 1936, Roman amphitheater, etc. Then we display dozens of old lithographs, hand-bills, throwaways, heralds, tickets, passes, programs, letter heads, letters written and signed by Barnum, Forepaugh, etc., etc.

In frames are such items as hook that was used by Lillian Litzel at the time of her fall along with pictures; whistle used by Fred Bradna to conduct the show with for over forty years with pictures, etc., etc. Circus books printed in 1598 and 1600 written in Latin and Greek on the Roman Circus. Gauntlets owned and worn by Buffalo Bill. In fact anything that would interest the general public. Children and adults. Of course none of the people on the regular tours get to handle the choice items in the historical room. That is just for circus "nuts."

Also in one of the main buildings we have the large wagons, tan-bark floor and all. In there are "The Five Graces," The Lion Tableau (Hagenbeck), The Elephant Tableau (Hagenbeck), The Lion and the Gladiator, The Lion and the Serpent. Between the main museum and the historical room we have the Two Jester Calliope, No. 71 Cage Wagon (with carved figures on each corner). Calliope music pours forth from the Two Jesters through a hidden P. A. system operated from one of the buildings. The Two Jesters has just been restored and repainted. The figures and scroll work is all in gold. Looks very nice.

In the main building, music from Merle Evans recordings comes from the Big Top of the large model circus. It adds much to the display. Puts a little life in the set-up. We are trying to get away from that library feeling in the museum. You know what I mean, where everybody whispers.

Hundreds of pictures have been framed and hung in the different rooms. Pictures of human oddities seem to take the time of the general public. They would rather read about some fat lady, three legged man or two headed baby than read an 1840 herald. But not the real circus fans. Give them a good old rat bill and they will read the smallest of print. Well, we have something for everyone. Models for the kids, oddities for the tourists, oddities and real meat for the lovers and fans of the circus.

(Continued on page 5)

NOTES FROM MUSEUM (Cont'd)

Henry North has turned over to us all the old scrap books that were got together by the press department of the old Barnum & Bailey Show. These and all the old office and business books of the B. & B. These were got together long before Ringling purchased the B. & B. show in 1906. Most of the books date back during the 80's and 90's. Also all the old record books of the European tour of B. & B. 1897-1902. Ledgers, accounts, expense, salaries, in fact just a vast amount of unbelievable gems. We also have all the large press clipping books of the Ringling Shows for the 20's, 30's, 40's. These are all in our historical room. This fall we are having some fire-proof vaults made for the unreplaceable material on hand and what we hope to collect.

—John L. Sullivan, Curator.

July issue of HOLIDAY has a fine illustrated story by Bill Balantine entitled "Courtship of a Clown."

MINSTREL SHOW PHOTOS

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CIRCUS PHOTOS

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ROBERT SAME

2745 Bush Blvd., Ensley
BIRMINGHAM 8, ALA.

July BLUE BOOK has another story, "The Big Herd" by Robert Barbour Johnson.

The Circus Fan Association of America received a page of pictures in the July issue of FRIENDS, a magazine published by Chevrolet dealers.

July MEN published for Goodrich tire dealers carries a two-page article on the Gainesville Community Circus with two illustrations.

HOBBIES magazine will carry articles on Circus Stars of Yesteryears by A Morton Smith. The July issue has a fine article on Eugenie Silbon with three illustrations.

1950 DELUXE CIRCUS PHOTOS

DAILEY BROS. 40 pix equip. including all wagons \$4.00; 30 train shots all loaded flats, stock & psgr. \$3.00; 10 performers \$1.00; 20 animals \$2.00; 30 lot views \$3.00. AL G. KELLY-MILLER BROS. 40 pix each truck & trailer \$4.00; 25 performers \$2.50; 15 animals \$1.50; 40 lot scenes \$4.00. MILLS BROS. 25 pix equipment \$2.50; 30 performers \$3.00; 15 lot scenes \$1.50. BRANDON BROS. CIRCUS 15 pix \$1.50. JAY GOULD CIRCUS 20 pix \$2.00. HENNIES BROS SHOWS 48 pix including all 23 loaded flats, 6 psgr. & 1 box \$5.00.

1949 COLE BROS. 25 pix train \$2.50 including loaded flats; 25 equipment \$2.50.

1949 CLYDE BEATTY 15 pix train \$1.50.

1949 CLYDE BEATTY 30 pix equipment \$3.00.

1948 RB&B train views \$3.00.

1949 ROYAL AMERICAN SHOWS 13 pix \$2.00.

1936 RB&B 48 pix \$6.00.

1936 COLE BROS. 20 pix \$3.00.

1936 AL G. BARNES 44 views \$5.50.

J. McROBERTS

908 Madison St.
TOPEKA, KANSAS

MILLS BROS. GET WIND AT NILES

Gary, Ind., May 29

Dear Bob—

Thanks for your card and will give you the dope on Niles, which was much less than some of the papers made it out to be.

We did have a very bad wind and rain storm that struck during the afternoon performance, and we are very thankful that it was not worse.

You have heard of firebugs, and there was a storm bug there, who really caused the real uproar. He got hold of the South Bend radio station and told 'em tent had collapsed, several hundred were killed, etc., and they came roaring down with several fire trucks, two ambulances, and even came running in with stretchers.

Actually, there was no collapse at all, of tent or poles. Side poles did some dancing, as in any rough storm like this, and the canvas flapped and people naturally got excited, some of them scared and panicky and ran out. After first blow of storm, it subsided a bit and we started show again and some people came back in. Then storm hit again and, upon request of sponsor president, Harold Klute of Niles Service Club, we stopped it, made announcement people could come back free to night show. And a lot of them did. We had big night crowd, and all went on schedule.

Chief of Police, Mayor, and auspice pres., who also is Niles pros. attorney, inspected whole thing and were on grounds throughout, and gave us following statement to show future auspice, etc.

May 25, 1950.

"To Whom It May Concern:

Despite any rumors to the contrary, we the undersigned wish to state that none of the Mills Bros. Circus tents blew down in the storm that struck here during their afternoon performance.

Further, the equipment was all checked and found to be in good condition, and the evening show was carried on as scheduled."

L. E. THOMPSON, Mayor

L. O. BATES, Chief of Police

HAROLD KLUTE, Pres., Niles Service Club.

All papers gave it a whirl. Chi Daily News had big banners about 3000 or 4000 fleeing, but when you read below headline and read story there wasn't much in it. Chi Tribune gave best summation in last sentence of enclosed story, telling that, except for taking 2 women to hospital, only thing troopers really had to do was round up some kids who got separated from parents.

There were two injuries, two women. Treated at hospital, but not serious and, I believe, let out and not kept there. Said were hit by falling poles and we knew this a lot of bull, for no poles fell, and no canvas. One of our performers told us later she saw how these two women were hurt—falling when coming out of blues.

Another screwy lady said she wanted her money back. Said, "I was nervous, mister, but I wasn't so nervous I didn't know what was going on, I was chased by one of your elephants and I know it."

The guy who said he was a public protector and ranted and raved and got hold of South Bend radio was screwball and police had him thrown off the lot. He said someone ought to check with weatherman on these things and determine ahead of time if a storm was coming on a certain day and not let shows like this go on, so you can see the kind of guy he was. Then he said his kid was hurt, and we sent a man to see. Kid was home, not in any hospital, and when we checked him he had not even been at the circus. But the father said the kid suffered shock.

That's about it. Glad it wasn't worse. Our good new tents stood the storm fine, and no damage at all.

Regards from us all,

FRED S.

P.S.—There were, by actual count, 2146 in the tent at matinee, not 3000 or 4000 as papers said. Night crowd was about 2100 or 2200, so I guess Niles people weren't too scared by it all.

* *

The above letter was received by the Secretary of CHS from Fred Stafford, Press Representative of Mills Bros. Circus.

Bob King write that he has been on the lot with Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus on seven different days, and has had a wonderful time each day. Col. Woodcock, Capt. Hamiter and Lone Stevens, all members of CHS, made the days seem very short. He had the opportunity of talking to Dore Miller quite a bit, and found him a wonderful host. Bob took tickets on the front door, and tells us this story. On Sunday afternoon, when the show was in Celina, Ohio, business was

The Bandwagon

News and Activities of the
CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Founded in 1939

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Div. 9—Canada—Edward Cripps.
Div. 10—South America and England—E. Titus.

very good, and two matinees were given. A man came along, carrying a baby in a basket. Bob asked how old the baby was, and was told it was 6 weeks old. So, Bob says, "That's getting an early start for a circus fan isn't it?" The proud father replied, "He is getting plenty old enough to go to the circus—you know he has to start sometime."

Bob also has a copy of the Daily Program and Magazine of Kelly-Miller Circus, and tells us that it is a masterpiece. He says that he has never seen a cover such as they have on it—and the reading matter inside is fine. Better get a copy—its OK.



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